

NSC BRIEFING

DOCUMENT NO. ~~SECRET~~  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. LI  
DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: IRAQ  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 12/23/74 REVIEWER: 372044

24 June 1959

I. In Iraq, behind-the-scene struggle between Communists and Qasim continuing. Non-Communist Iraqi officials feel signs stronger than ever that Qasim intends to oust the more notorious pro-Communist officers from army.

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A. [REDACTED] Assistant Army Chief of Staff for Plans, and director of the Baghdad Police have been fired or transferred.

B. Qasim last week warned that any army officer showing political partisanship activity would be "brought to account."

1. Statement apparently followed complaints by army commanders of excessive Communist activity and arrest of commander of an armored brigade who had encouraged open Communist activity among his men.

II. Complaints of Communist newspapers have become shriller.

A. Most recent attacks are against action of army officers: one prevented bodies of Communist "martyrs" killed in peasant riots from being brought to Baghdad; another refused to allow Communist committee to enter Radio Baghdad. For the first time Communist press says army is being used against interests of people.

B. Press war is going on between Communist journals and organ of National Democratic Party, which is contesting control of peasant organizations with Communists.

III. Qasim's latest "revolution," which he promised to announce on 22

June, turns out merely to be signed agreement with British for withdrawal from sterling area, a matter under discussion since last fall.

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- A. Iraqis hail this as dawn of economic independence.
  - B. In fact move has little economic significance. Iraqis now more free to back their currency with proportionately larger amounts of dollars and other hard currencies.
- IV. Soviet Ambassador Zaitsev has left Baghdad for a few weeks reportedly for "medical treatment" in Moscow.
- A. Likely that present Communist party problems in Iraq will be given review by Moscow during his visit.